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Buddy Programs:

best practices and outcomes in community-based integration initiatives for immigrant youth

BRITISH COLUMBIA

COMMUNITY LIAISON BRANCH

MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR MULTICULTURALISM AND IMMIGRATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Liaison Branch of the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration has conducted the following research in buddy programs. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of program activities and to assist communities, other governments and funders to respond effectively to community-based initiatives for newcomer immigrant youth. The goals of the research are to determine best practices and concerns in buddy programs and to identify settlement and multiculturalism outcomes.

Overall, key practices in buddy programs can be collapsed in the following categories:

⇒ establishing and maintaining support with schools, teachers and counselors
⇒ marketing the benefits of the program to youth
⇒ developing flexible program components that combine both paired and group activities
⇒ diversifying activities and meeting the needs of target groups to sustain participant interest
⇒ instilling program ownership and holding regular evaluation sessions
⇒ delivering appropriate training and orientation to participants
⇒ recognizing the efforts of volunteer hosts

The practices highlighted in this study are by no means exhaustive—only key activities have been noted. Furthermore, the efforts of buddy program coordinators can only be successful with the additional support of schools, other community partners, and government institutions.

Generally, the main outcomes of buddy programs are:

- creating peer support networks
- connecting youth to local community resources
- promoting volunteerism
- providing basic information, orientation and access to resources through peer support, role-modeling and leadership

Several buddy programs also include the following outcomes:

- connecting parents and families of participants to community resources
- cross-cultural awareness
- understanding intergenerational adaptation
- early intervention for youth in need of additional assistance
- reducing incidents of racism, gang involvement and high school drop out rates

After obtaining information from buddy program coordinators, teachers and program participants, the study puts forward the following recommendations:

- That a *Buddy Program Handbook/Training Guide* be developed at the community level. The handbook should include information on written and visual resources, facilitators, training ideas, community contacts, and basic "how-to's" of operating a buddy program. The manual should be made available to community organizations and schools that may wish to develop buddy programs.

- That communities seek increased participation and support from schools to enhance program ownership.

- That buddy program coordinators continue to collaborate with their own community networks, the Community Liaison Branch, and other funding bodies, to address the additional support they require and to identify training needs and resources to address gaps in service for immigrant youth.

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Introduction

The Community Liaison Branch of the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration has conducted the following research in community "buddy programs." The main objective is to study best practices undertaken by community organizations related to immigrant youth integration—specifically in "buddy programs"—and to look at emerging concerns. Another objective is to identify the settlement and multiculturalism outcomes of these programs. This document can also be of assistance to community organizations that may wish to develop buddy programs in their respective communities.

The following research is not intended to be a "step by step" guide into the operation of a successful buddy program but, rather, presents key activities in program planning and coordination employed by buddy program coordinators. In addition, the study highlights emerging issues and barriers to program success.

What are "Buddy Programs"?

Buddy programs are offered in various community centres and neighbourhood houses to assist new immigrant youth in their settlement and adaptation process. Along with this objective, buddy programs also provide opportunities for positive peer networking between immigrant and non-immigrant youth. To achieve such goals, buddy program coordinators recruit "Canadianized" youth to become hosts and pair them up with newcomer immigrant youth based on compatibility and interests. Buddy programs are usually run after school and on weekends. Some activities take place during the summer months. Activities are wide-ranging: educational; recreational; social; orientation and training.

Hosts are volunteer students who attend the same school or reside in the same neighbourhood as their newcomer partners. They receive appropriate training prior to becoming hosts and leaders. Hosts act as mentors and role models, whom newcomer buddies can turn to when practicing English or aquainting themselves to the community. Many hosts are themselves immigrants who have once participated in the program as newcomers.

Newcomer buddies are program participants who are new immigrants. They are mainly recruited from ESL classes in their schools.

Methodology

Research was conducted on buddy programs that received Branch funding during the 1997-98 fiscal year, with the exception of one program—Sunset Community Centre—which received funding at the federal level. The following is a list of participating organizations:

- Collingwood Neighbourhood House, *Renfrew-Collingwood Youth Program/Buddy Program*
- Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House, *Youth Connection*
- Greater Coquitlam Volunteer Centre, *ESL Volunteer Buddy Program*
- Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, *Youth Cultural Buddy Program*
- Penticton and District Multicultural Society, *Youth Friendship Club*
- Ray Cam Cooperative Centre, *Buddy Pairing Program*
- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, *Cultural Buddy Program*
- Sunset Community Centre, *Buddy Program*
- West End Community Centre Association, *Immigrant ESL Buddy Program*

Information was gathered through a qualitative, semi-directed interview process with program coordinators and teachers. In addition, information was obtained from program participants of three buddy programs through survey questionnaires.

Sample Questionnaire to Buddy Program Coordinators

What practices are most useful to you in:
establishing support
recruiting
grouping participants
sustaining participant interest
involving parents
measuring outcomes

What structures need to be in place in the pre- and post-activity stage?
What are examples of your program's activities?
What do you see as barriers to program success?
What support do you require in achieving your goals?

Sample Questionnaire to Host Buddies

Where were you born?
How did you learn about the program?
Why did you decide to become a host?
How would you rate the program?
What do you think new Canadians are gaining from the program?
What have you learned as hosts?
What improvements can be made to the program?
Do you prefer group or one-to-one activities with your buddies?
What do you think makes a good match of buddies?
What are your parents' responses to your involvement in the program?

Sample Questionnaire to Newcomer Buddies

Where were you born?
How long have you been in Canada?
How long have you been involved in the Buddy Program?
Why did you join the program?
How would you rate the program?
What improvements can be made to the program?
How is the program helpful to new Canadians like yourself?
Do you prefer group or one-to-one activities with your buddies?
Would you be interested in becoming a host?
What do you think makes a good match of buddies?
What are your parents' responses to your involvement in the program?

Best Practices in Buddy Programs

The following practices have been categorized in a list format by the researcher for ease of reference. Attempts have been made to list the practices in chronological order. Categories include key activities in:

- Establishing Program Support
- Recruiting Program Participants
- Training/Orienting Program Participants
- Grouping Process
- Sustaining Program Interest
- Involving Parents/Families
- Following Up with Post-Program Activities

Establishing Program Support

⇒ For the most part, recruiting for buddy programs in both elementary and high schools is done through ESL classes. Therefore, the support of schools is crucial to program success. Endorsement from the school principal can help to ensure a more active role from teachers and counselors and a smoother negotiation for use of program space. Once support of the principal is established, meetings are arranged with ESL counselors, and other resource workers such as ESL support workers and neighbourhood workers to develop recruitment and activity schedules.

⇒ Once the recruitment is complete and activities begin, regular program updates are provided to teachers and other school staff involved. To ensure that school staff and resources are in place, coordinators deliver presentations to principals and teachers, explaining the significance of the program. Teachers are also encouraged to visit the community organization where buddy programs are held.

Recruiting Program Participants

Different strategies are used to recruit newcomers in elementary and high schools: Recruiting at the elementary level occurs in two ways: 1) the ESL teacher invites the program coordinator to deliver a presentation to the class; or 2) the ESL teacher performs most of the recruiting—they identify ESL students whom they think may benefit from the buddy program and refer the students to the buddy program coordinator who is invited to deliver a presentation to the students. Activities are mainly conducted in the classroom during school lunch hours or after school.

At the high school level, ESL teachers introduce program coordinators to the class.

Program coordinators deliver presentations and invite students to join the program.

Strategies to recruit volunteer hosts include extending invitations to hosts and newcomers who have previously participated in the program, setting up promotional tables in schools, distributing posters to schools and community agencies and establishing contacts with mainstream youth programs.

Key recruiting practices are:

⇒ **Advertising the program early in the school year.** The timing of the recruitment process is critical. Program coordinators suggest advertising the program in September along with most other in-school programs. They indicated that by October, students have generally chosen their extra-curricular activities.

⇒ **Stressing the expectations required of the students during the early stages.** The personal and time commitment of students is emphasized at the initial class presentation and again at the orientation stage to eliminate uninterested individuals and reduce dropout rates later in the program.

⇒ **Distributing consent forms.**[1] Consent forms must be easy to understand and translated in different languages to be effective.

⇒ **Delivering buddy program presentations to ESL classes.** Slides, videos, and photographs of buddy program activities are shown. Pamphlets and other related program information are distributed. Coordinators provide translated materials when possible.

⇒ **Marketing the benefits of becoming volunteer host buddies to older youth.** Benefits include: fulfilling "Career and Personal Planning" (CAPP)[2] requirements; obtaining leadership skills; gaining valuable job experience; securing job references.

⇒ **Exhausting all recruiting sources.** Along with recruiting students at ESL classes, buddy programs are advertised in high school papers, information tables at schools and community centres, and through the community organization's newsletters.

⇒ **Obtaining profiles of elementary student buddies, if possible.** Some program

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[1] Sending consent forms to parents is the usual practice for elementary school programs.

[2] The aim of CAPP (Grades 8 to 12) is to enable students to become thoughtful, caring individuals who plan and reflect, make informed choices, and take responsibility for their own personal and career development. CAPP curriculum consists of three interrelated elements in Grades 8 to 12: the planning process, personal development, and career development. In Grades 11 and 12, work experience is included. (Information obtained from: *Career and Personal Planning 8 to 12, Integrated Resource Package 1995*. Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, pp. 1-4.)

coordinators receive student profiles from ESL teachers. These profiles assist the coordinator in the matching process.

⇒ **Giving tours of one's community organization to ESL classes.**

Training/Orienting Program Participants

⇒ **Offering orientation for both hosts and newcomer buddies.** Both groups receive orientation to the program's goals, activities, and administrative tasks, e.g., completion of expense forms. Orientation also includes making the participants feel welcomed by acquainting them to the organization and to other staff.

⇒ **Training ideas include:** leadership training for hosts prior to becoming "host buddies"; anti-racism and cross-cultural understanding; the value of volunteerism; team-building; understanding intergenerational issues; life skills training for older youth; career preparation.

Grouping Process

⇒ **Maintaining a flexible grouping process.** Generally speaking, buddies are paired up on a one-to-one basis. However, some programs focus on group activities (appropriate for younger participants in particular) or hosts are sometimes matched with more than one newcomer. Coordinators change matches whenever they feel it necessary or appropriate. Program participants may trade partners in consultation with the program coordinator. In essence, the students need to feel comfortable with the matching decisions in order to benefit from the program and have an enjoyable experience.

⇒ **Incorporating both group and paired activities.** While some buddy programs emphasize one-to-one interaction between host and newcomer buddies, others focus solely on group activities. Most, however, prefer to incorporate both. To ensure that matches are made appropriately, most coordinators arrange group activities prior to matching, to observe group interaction and natural pairings, and assess personalities. Moreover, survey results from program participants indicate that group activities, or a combination of both, are preferred.

⇒ **Grouping participants who do not speak the same language.** Coordinators feel that it is not a priority to group participants who speak the same language, as the objectives are to practice speaking English and obtain cross-cultural understanding. Exceptions, however, are made to match on a same language basis if the newcomer buddy has little or no comprehension of English, or if the newcomer buddy is shy or reserved. Participant surveys indicate that both are satisfactory.

Sustaining Program Interest

⇒ **Establishing program ownership.** Coordinators hold regular feedback sessions with participants. Participants are asked to comment on program evaluation and improvement. A usual practice is to have participants create their own set of activities and activity timeframe.

⇒ **Incorporating a variety of fundraising efforts.**[3] Fundraising activities have the potential to raise money enough for major activities such as a skiing or camping trip. After the money has been raised, participants decide on activities they wish to partake in. Scheduling a major activity at the end of the program cycle can help to maintain commitment and interest.

⇒ **Ensuring transportation arrangements are made when programs end after dusk.** Some programs benefit from the use of a van and can provide rides home to participants when required. However, most programs rely on public transit, and groups meet and depart from certain locations. Coordinators expressed the importance of informing parents of program end times, when possible, so parents can make arrangements to pick up their children at program locations.

⇒ **Delivering activities that are diverse, suit the needs of target groups and most importantly are enjoyable.** Most program activities are highly interactive and are structured around educational, recreational and social needs. Some programs even include career training and job preparation, life skills, and volunteer work. Furthermore, activities may take different foci depending on the expertise of the coordinator and the preferences of the participants.

⇒ **Holding homework clubs.** Coordinators believed that homework clubs serve both educational and social purposes. Furthermore, homework clubs draw program support from parents.

⇒ **Enticing youth with food.** Coordinators offer snacks and refreshments during orientation and other activities. Coordinators generally agreed that having food available during activities is a useful method of maintaining interest.

Involving Parents/Guardians

⇒ **Contacting the parents or guardians of newcomer buddies.** When possible, coordinators contact parents and guardians of newcomer buddies to describe the

[3] Fundraising activities are not common features of most buddy programs.

program's objectives, activities, and benefits.

⇒ **Encouraging families to attend events held or sponsored by the organization, e.g., family potlucks, picnics, etc.**

Following Up with Post-Program Activities

⇒ **Encouraging participants to evaluate the program at the end of the year.** Several buddy programs incorporate an evaluation mechanism where participants are asked to provide formal or informal feedback to coordinators. Evaluation formats vary—they are either completed at the end of the program or held on a weekly basis in an open forum format where coordinators make notes and adjustments. Evaluation questionnaires should be clear and easy to understand.

⇒ **Recognizing volunteers and demonstrating appreciation.** Volunteer hosts dedicate many hours to help newcomer buddies. Their commitment to the program and to their peers should be formally recognized. Volunteer recognition events and gifts are ways to demonstrate appreciation.

⇒ **Following up with past program participants.** Some program coordinators develop and maintain mailing/distribution lists. Invitations are extended to past program participants to attend in-house activities such as festive parties, potlucks. Following up with participants also provides an update on the activities they are currently involved in.

⇒ **Encouraging newcomer buddies to become host buddies.** Program coordinators encourage graduating newcomer buddies to become host buddies for newcomer immigrant youth.

Program Evaluation and Outcomes

Current evaluation methods vary between agencies. Evaluation methods include: the

collection of data on participation; feedback from host and newcomer participants, ESL teachers, counselors and parents through questionnaires or focus group discussions; progress reports by staff; and meetings with youth advisory groups and referral agencies. Organizations also assess their program's ability to fulfill goals and objectives in various ways. Some examples are:

- comparing pre- and post-program profiles to assess the program's impact on newcomers
- looking at target groups, resource adequacy, accessibility and involvement of students and their families in other community programs
- assessing program sessions and activities

Generally, the main outcomes of buddy programs are:

- creating peer support networks
- connecting youth to local community resources
- promoting volunteerism in youth
- providing basic information, orientation and access to resources through peer support, role-modeling and leadership

Buddy programs also include the following expected outcomes:

- connecting parents and families of participants to community resources[4]
- cross-cultural awareness
- understanding intergenerational adaptation
- early intervention for youth in need of additional assistance
- reducing incidents of racism, gang involvement and high school drop out rates

All of the buddy programs researched have reported successfully meeting the expected outcomes in: providing peer support networks for immigrant youth, thereby reducing isolation; providing positive role models; leadership; and opportunities to develop social and language skills. The following examples of participant survey responses speak to these outcomes:

Example responses from host buddies to the question, "What have you learned as hosts?":

- "making new friends"
- "how to get around in Vancouver"

[4] Measuring this outcome is, for the most part, based on the participant's anecdotal feedback to program coordinators and teachers (e.g., youth providing community orientation to their parents—taking the bus, going to the public library). There is no formalized process of measuring the outcomes of parents' connection to the greater community.

- "improvement in English"
- "learned about different people, different cultures and different religions"
- "learned to listen to others' ideas, build group working relationship"
- "learned to be a positive role model to the children"
- "the spectacular range of ethnic groups in Vancouver"
- "I wanted to become active in the community and also wanted to learn about Vancouver."
- "share knowledge with newcomers"

Example responses from newcomer buddies to the question, "How is the program helpful to a new Canadian like yourself?":

- "a way to practice English skills"
- "the fieldtrips gave a chance to get to know Vancouver"
- "learn about other cultures with different belief systems and languages"
- "a way to make new friends"
- "learn about things not taught in the classroom"

Barriers to Program Success

Program coordinators have expressed the following issues and concerns on program delivery:

Dealing With Youth Who Have Additional Needs

The program focuses on the general goal of assisting newcomer immigrant youth in adapting to their new communities; however, other issues arise and must be addressed. Coordinators see a need to pursue more one-to-one counseling or small group interventions for ESL students needing additional assistance. Because the program is a general one, coordinators feel that insufficient resources are in place to help them address these issues.

Support From Other Services

Program coordinators have indicated a need to establish more one-to-one connection with families. Barriers to achieving this goal have been identified as: 1) lack of translation services; 2) lack of time, as most of the coordinator's efforts are dedicated to recruiting, planning, preparing and delivering activities, maintaining relations with school staff, and

completing administrative duties. Agencies need to look at ways to increase support and assist buddy program coordinators to connect to other culturally-appropriate youth and family services within their organization or in the community.

Sustaining Interest of Older Hosts

Some coordinators find it a challenge to sustain the interest of hosts since teens have many interests and commitments and come with different program expectations. Program coordinators recognize the need to be innovative in maintaining participant interest. They feel the best way is to instill program ownership in youth, obtaining continual feedback from participants and tailoring the program to suit their needs.

Maintaining School Support

Much of the program's success rests on support from schools. Program coordinators spend numerous hours developing and maintaining relationships with principals, teachers, counselors and resource workers. Program recruitment relies heavily on the support and commitment of teachers. Coordinators expressed the need for schools to have a greater awareness of buddy program objectives and outcomes, and its connection to educational requirements; e.g., fulfilling learning outcomes in the Career and Personal Planning curriculum. Efforts of buddy programs will be enhanced and wider-reaching when teachers take more ownership to the program.

Lack of Space

Adequate space for group activities is an issue for some programs where premises are small. This is an issue especially in the winter months, when most group activities are held indoors. Coordinators must be more creative in planning activities.

Ensuring Accessibility for Both Genders

Male-female participation ratio varies from program to program. Program coordinators account for this in the following:

- *Cultural issue.* Girls from some cultures are not encouraged by their families to

participate in activities outside the school; in particular, co-ed functions.[5]

- *Depends on gender of newcomers.* For example, a program coordinator stated that most of the newcomers in the ESL class were male and therefore, new participants were mostly male.
- *The coordinator dynamic.* One coordinator believes that there is a larger male participation ratio in his program because he is a male recruiter. Modeling a gender balance at the recruiting process may encourage a gender balance among participants.
- *Word of mouth.* Youth are recruiting other youth and engage in same-gender recruitment.

Training and Resources

Buddy program coordinators, generally, facilitate workshops and training for participants, as hiring outside facilitators is costly. Resource people are invited on a no-fee basis to deliver workshops. Coordinators indicated that more training is desirable in areas that are related to buddy programs: skill development training in dealing with sensitive issues; train-the-trainer programs to learn more about facilitating anti-racism, cross-cultural understanding workshops. One program recognized a need to deliver workshops to its staff on ESL student issues.

Coordinators identified a lack of appropriate training resources that are youth-centered or buddy program-related. For buddy programs outside of the Lower Mainland, this is an even more serious issue. Coordinators emphasized the need to create a buddy program manual, which would include: a list of resource people and facilitators; a list of contact people involved in similar work; training guides and resources on workshops such as anti-racism and cross-cultural understanding; other program models; basic how-to's on delivering buddy programs.

Discussion and Conclusion

Buddy programs are successfully meeting the expected outcomes. These outcomes include:

[5] South Vancouver Neighbourhood House has taken this into consideration when it decided to run an all-girls club.

- creating peer support networks
- connecting youth to local community resources
- promoting volunteerism
- providing basic information, orientation and access to resources through peer support, role-modeling and leadership
- connecting parents and families of participants to community resources
- promoting cross-cultural awareness
- understanding intergenerational adaptation
- providing early intervention for youth in need of additional assistance
- reducing incidents of racism, gang involvement and high school drop out rates

Overall, key practices in buddy programs can be collapsed in the following categories:

⇒ establishing and maintaining support with schools, teachers and counselors

⇒ marketing the benefits of the program to youth

⇒ developing flexible program components that combine both paired and group activities

⇒ diversifying activities and meeting the needs of target groups to sustain participant interest

⇒ instilling program ownership and holding regular evaluation sessions

⇒ delivering appropriate training and orientation to participants

⇒ recognizing the efforts of volunteer hosts

Program success depends largely on the coordinator's own creativity and ability to motivate participants, as well as the degree of support from his or her organization and community network. Ultimately, effective buddy programs are those that the youth find most enjoyable. Buddy program coordinators can employ the practices as highlighted in this study but adequate support from funding sources, schools, and other community services must be in place.

Initiatives addressing the needs of newcomer immigrant youth have already been implemented at the school level. The Vancouver School Board developed a resource kit for teachers on the integration of secondary school ESL students.[6] One of the activities includes establishing mentoring, buddying or peer tutoring programs for ESL students.[7] In addition to these school activities, ESL students require more dynamic, wider-reaching

[6] *In Your Classroom: Supporting the Integration of Secondary ESL Learners.* Vancouver School Board, Curriculum Publications, 1994.

[7] Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School's "Mosaic Club" is an example of such an initiative—a student-driven buddy/friendship club that receives direction and support from the ESL teacher and school counselor.

supports and structures that include: a greater awareness of teachers, in all districts, of the benefits of buddy programs and its connection to CAPP curriculum requirements; as well as an increased priority from schools to work collaboratively with communities in addressing the needs of immigrant youth and their families.

An important support structure for buddy programs is the network of program coordinators in the Lower Mainland who meet on a regular basis to share information and discuss program issues. Coordinators expressed the importance of having this network available but emphasized the need for additional training and program resources. Programs outside the Lower Mainland, however, lack this networking opportunity and access to resources. Therefore, the development of a buddy program handbook and training guide would be useful for all communities, particularly for those wanting to initiate buddy programs. Currently, some programs are engaging in their own efforts in developing informal resource manuals, but completion of such manuals involves a great deal of time and is difficult to balance with other program responsibilities. What is required, then, is a coordination of these efforts to develop a more formal handbook that would be useful and made available to community organizations.

The program's ability to connect parents to the larger community is not formally measured. For the most part, this is measured in qualitative and anecdotal ways (e.g., stories of participants providing community orientation to their parents and having discussions with their parents on their experiences and new knowledge gained from the program). Measuring parents' connection to the wider community is a time issue for coordinators, who mainly focus their efforts in program planning and delivering activities for youth.

The lack of time expressed by program coordinators to fulfill other duties effectively (e.g., connecting newcomer families to community sources) is also an issue when it comes to dealing with immigrant youth who require further assistance. Coordinators engage in informal counseling with participants but express a need for more one-to-one sessions. However, buddy programs are designed to help immigrant youth adapt and are not programs targeted to immigrant youth at risk. An effective referral system needs to be in place to help coordinators deal with youth and families who have additional needs.

The Community Liaison Branch can help in increasing the effectiveness of buddy programs by continuing to work with program coordinators in addressing their concerns, and providing the support program coordinators require to carry out their goals. Such support can be in providing resources for training program coordinators and providing input on a buddy program handbook. Furthermore, the Branch and community agencies could work collaboratively with schools to identify ways of increasing support and building program ownership.

This study not only offers insights on buddy program activities, practices and issues but, hopefully, can also be used as a tool for community organizations and schools wishing to

develop their own initiatives. The following recommendations for buddy programs are put forward:

Recommendations

- That a *Buddy Program Handbook/Training Guide* be developed at the community level. The handbook should include information on written and visual resources, facilitators, training ideas, community contacts, and basic "how-to's" of operating a buddy program. The manual should be distributed to community organizations and schools.
- That communities seek increased participation and support from schools to enhance program ownership.
- That buddy program coordinators continue to collaborate with their own community networks, the Community Liaison Branch, and other funding bodies, to address the additional support they require and to identify training needs and resources to address gaps in service for immigrant youth.

Appendix A: Description of Buddy Programs

Collingwood Neighbourhood House

Person Interviewed:	Leslie Muto
Address:	5288 Joyce Street, Vancouver, B.C.
Telephone:	435-0323
Project:	Renfrew-Collingwood Youth Project: Buddy Program

Project Description

This project is designed to respond to the settlement, integration and adaptation needs of newcomer youth through coordination, development, planning and implementation of a "Buddy Program" in four local schools in the Renfrew-Collingwood Community. The main emphasis is to provide ESL students with increased opportunities for social support networks, recreation and friendship outside of school hours; to introduce young people and their families to services within the community and ways to access; and to enable newcomer youth to develop and practice language and social skills.

Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House

Person Interviewed:	Malcolm Key
Address:	2131 Renfrew Street, Vancouver
Telephone:	251-1225
Project:	Youth Connection: Support and Integration Services for New Immigrant Youth

Project Description

The primary goal of the Youth Connection project is to provide support and integration services of new immigrant youth by pairing them with Canadian youth trained in leadership and mentorship skills. The project works in partnership with the ESL department at Vancouver Technical Secondary School to identify new immigrant youth and to welcome and involve them in the program. The program provides new immigrant

youth with social and emotional support through their relations with their pairs and it provides opportunities for homework help, community volunteer service, life skills and pre-employment training and personal development. The project outcomes are: the formation of supportive social networks for new immigrant youth, improved English and communication skills, and greater integration of new immigrant youth, and often their families into the community.

Greater Coquitlam Volunteer Centre

Person Interviewed:	Emmanuel Shamatutu
Address:	927 Brunette Avenue, Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 1C8
Telephone:	524-9808
Project:	ESL Volunteer Buddy Program

Project Description

This project will develop the capacity within the school system and the community to increase the number of students having volunteer experiences in the community and build a mechanism that helps to reduce the barriers between the ESL students and the general school population and assists with the development of English language skills. This is accomplished by developing a process and resource material and building relationships that will assist ESL and non ESL students to be matched with "buddies" within their schools who share similar interests enabling them to experience the benefits of volunteering together. This project is tested in each of the Secondary and Middles schools in the Coquitlam School District that are interested in participating. Activities work within the existing school system which includes the ESL teachers, the Career and Planning Preparation instructors, the school counselors, the clubs and groups that exist within each school, and the parents. It will also be an opportunity for the Volunteer Centre to build stronger relationships with community organizations, continue the work with these organizations to increase the acceptance of and incorporation of youth volunteers and those with new or limited English skills into their volunteer programs.

Kiwassa Neighbourhood House

Person Interviewed:	Kyle Pierce
Address:	2425 Oxford Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5K 1M7
Telephone:	254-5401
Project:	Youth Cultural Buddy Program

Project Description

Through matching of new immigrant youth with volunteer youth (Grades 8-12). Newcomers will be assisted in the settlement and adaptation process, and in becoming integrated in the community. Peer tutor training and mentor training will be given to the peer hosts and group social, education, leadership and recreation programs will be used to assist the newcomers in their settlement and adaptation process. Expected program outcomes achieved are: better knowledge for new immigrant youth of Canadian society; reduced isolation; increased self-esteem, increased community integration; reduced family conflict; improved mastery of English; increase positive community involvement.

Penticton and District Multicultural Society

Person Interviewed:	Vicki Lightfoot
Address:	220 Manor Park Drive, Penticton, B.C. V2A 2R2
Telephone:	(250) 492-6299
Project:	Youth Friendship Club

Project Description

This friendship group meets once a week at Parkway Elementary School, during the lunchtime. The group consists of 10-15 refugee and immigrant children, aged 6-13, and are matched with a Canadian friend of their choice. First Nations children are encouraged to participate as well. Earlier this year two First Nations Teaching Assistants were involved in the program. This was very successful and next year, every effort will be made again to obtain First Nations volunteers to provide a First Nations point of view. The program provides a time to socialize and enhance students' personal growth, learn about cultural issues and activities of other ethnic groups, as well as Canadian holidays and customs. This group helps to alleviate potential tensions and promote understanding between racial groups.

Ray Cam Co-operative Centre

Person(s) Interviewed:	Mininder Sidhu; Paul Thomas
Address:	920 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C.
Telephone:	257-6949
Project:	Buddy Pairing Program

Project Description

To develop and operate a buddy system for elementary and high school-aged children in ESL, and classes with non-ESL students in the same school. This program promotes integration in and outside the school setting for these students. Leadership development represents a major focus of the buddy program, where both hosts and newcomers are encouraged to become active and involved in the community. There is also one-to-one support and small group interventions for ESL students outside the school setting and opportunities to integrate violence prevention, conflict resolution, and development programs with other community youth.

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

Person(s) Interviewed:	Rosemarie Stinson; Heather Mander
Address:	6470 Victoria Drive, Vancouver, B.C.
Telephone:	324-6212
Project:	Cultural Buddy Program

Project Description

The Cultural Buddy Program is designed to address the needs of new immigrant children in the South Vancouver community. The objectives of the project are to provide mentorship, reduce isolation, improve English language skills, learn about other cultures, foster life skills and offer sources of friendship to participants. The overriding goal of the project is to ease and facilitate the transition of new immigrant children into the multicultural community of South Vancouver. This is achieved by taking part in cross-cultural activities in pairs and groups expanding a youth support network.

West End Community Centre

Person(s) Interviewed:	Michael Herrin
Address:	870 Denman Street
Telephone:	257-8331
Project:	Immigrant ESL Buddy Program

Project Description

The Immigrant Buddy Program matches immigrant youth with peer hosts who work together to develop a program that focuses on social, education, and recreational activities. This process will facilitate the initial reception, orientation, adjustment and interaction of youth and families to their community and with mainstream neighbourhood services. Many of the new Canadians are from Eastern European background, traumatized by war and have a lack of trust in others, and some others are from Chinese, Japanese and Central American backgrounds.

Appendix B: Acknowledgements

The Community Liaison Branch would like to thank the following for contributing their valuable feedback and time to the study:

- Michael Herrin, *West End Community Centre Association*
- Malcolm Key, *Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House*
- Eric Kowalski, *Sunset Community Centre*
- Vicki Lightfoot, *Penticton and District Multicultural Society*
- Heather Mander, *South Vancouver Neighbourhood House*
- Crystal Mann, *Sunset Community Centre*
- Anita Morgan, *Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School*
- Leslie Muto, *Collingwood Neighbourhood House*
- Kyle Pierce, *Kiwassa Neighbourhood House*
- Emmanuel Shamatutu, *Greater Coquitlam Volunteer Centre*
- Mininder Sidhu, *Ray Cam Cooperative Centre*
- Rosemarie Stinson, *South Vancouver Neighbourhood House*
- Paul Thomas, *Ray Cam Cooperative Centre*
- Lynn Wells, *Penticton and District Multicultural Society*